

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 00301 200714Z

17

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 OMB-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /122 W

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R 200401Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1390

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 0301

KUWAIT PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SA, MU, TC

SUBJ: INQUIRY RE SAUDI - UAE BORDER SETTLEMENT STORY

REF: A. KUWAIT 0809 (NOTAL)

B. MANAMA 0123 (NOTAL)

C. LAHORE 0375 (NOTAL)

D. LAHORE 0410 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY:UAE VP SHAIKH RASHID HAS ASSURED EMB THAT THERE NO SUB-
STANCE TO REUTERS STORY OF IMMINENT RESOLUTION OF SAUDI-
ABU DHABI BORDER PROBLEM. WE SPECULATE THAT STORY MAY HAVE
BEEN INSPIRED BY PRE-ISLAMIC UNITY EUPHORIA. CERTAIN CONTACTS
HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER PAST FEW MONTHS BETWEEN SAG AND UAEG
AIMED AT EFFECTING NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS, BUT NONE SEEMED
TO HAVE ACHIEVED ANY DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS. MOST RECENT
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PAGE 02 ABU DH 00301 200714Z

CONTACT WAS VISIT TO UAE IN LATE JAN BY SAUDI AMB AL-RUMAIH

FROM BEIRUT. HOWEVER, EMB INFORMED THAT HIS TRIP DID NOT RELATE TO SAG-UAEG RELATIONS BUT RATHER TO MEDIATION ROLE AMB WAS PLAYING RE OLD TERRITORIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN OMAN AND ONE OF UAE MEMBERS, RAS-AL-KHAIMAH.

1. EMBASSY REGRETS DELAY IN RESPONDING INQUIRY CONTAINED REF A. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OUR UAEG CONTACTS WERE EQUALLY IN DARK ABOUT POSSIBLE SAUDI-UAE BORDER SETTLEMENT, WE DECIDED WITHHOLD COMMENT UNTIL MATTER COULD BE DISCUSSED WITH AT LEAST ONE OF UAE PRINCIPALS, WHO ATTENDED LAHORE CONFERENCE.

2. CHARGE HAD OCCASION WITHIN PAST WEEK TO RAISE MATTER WITH UAE VICE-PRESIDENT SHAIKH RASHID WHO ATTENDED LAHORE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE WITH SHAIKH ZAYID. RASHID ASSURED ME THAT THERE NO RPT NO SUBSTANCE TO REUTERS STORY OF IMMINENT SOLUTION TO ABU DHABI-SAUDI BORDER CONFLICT. RASHID SAID HE ALMOST CONSTANTLY IN PRESENCE OF SHAIKH ZAYID AND KING FAISAL AT LAHORE AND HE NOT AWARE OF ANY SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION THAT THEY MAY HAVE HAD ON THIS SUBJECT. RASHID EQUALLY AT LOSS TO EXPLAIN SOURCE OF STORY AS HE HIMSELF QUERIED BY PRESS ON SUBJECT IN LAHORE. HOPE TO SEE FM SUWAIDI NEXT WEEK AND WILL INQUIRE IF ANY PROGRESS MADE ON NORMALIZING UAE-SAG RELATIONS.

3. WHILE ADMITTEDLY PURE SPECULATION ON OUR PART, WE BELIEVE STORY MAY HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY PRE-ISLAMIC CONFERENCE EUPHORIA ASSOCIATED WITH DISPLAY OF ISLAMIC UNITY AND SPECIALLY FRANTIC EFFORTS TO REACH ACCOMODATION OF PAKISTANI-BANGLADESH RECOGNITION PROBLEM WHICH HAD THREATENED TO DISRUPT CONF AGENDA. IN VIEW OF CERTAIN CONTACTS, BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT, THAT UAE HAS PURSUED WITH SAG OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, IT ENTIRELY CONCEIVABLE THAT SOMEONE IN ENTOURAGE OF ZAYID MAY HAVE SPECULATED TO REUTERS CORRESPONDENT THAT PROSPECTS WERE FAVOARABLE FOR FINALIZING TERMS OF BORDER AGREEMENT DURING ISLAMIC MEETING. ON OTHER HAND, STORY MIGHT HAVE BEEN DELIBERATE PLOY ON PART OF UAEG TO INDUCE SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT ON PART OF SAUDIS IN DIRECTION OF COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT.

4. CONTACTS MENTIONED PARA 3 ABOVE INCLUDE REPORTED OVERTURES BY ZAYID TO KUWAITIS AND ESPECIALLY QATARIS (ABU DHABI 1659 DEC 20, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ABU DH 00301 200714Z

1973) TO INTERCEDE WITH KING FAISAL. IN ADDITION, SAUDI AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON, AL-RUMAIH, MADE UNUSUAL AND WELL-PUBLICIZED TRIP TO UAE TO

MEET WITH SHAIKH ZAYID IN LATE JANUARY WHILE PRES SADAT WAS VISITING ABU DHABI. PRESS REPORTED AL-RUMAIH HAD BROUGHT PERSONAL MESSAGES FOR BOTH ZAYID AND RASHID FROM FAISAL AND THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION THAT VISIT INVOLVED NEW SAUDI INITIATIVE ON BORDER QUESTION.

5. OUR SOUNDINGS SINCE THAT TIME HAVE FAILED, HOWEVER, TO SUBSTANTIATE THESE RUMORS; FROM STANDPOING SAUDI-UAE RELATIONS, AL-RUMAIH'S VISIT, AT MOST, WAS GOOD-WILL GESTURE ON PART OF SAG, AND ACCORDING SHAIKH RASHID, HE DID NOT RECEIVE ANY MSG FROM FAISAL. SHAIKH RASHID HAS ALSO CONFIRMED WHAT EMB LEARNED PREVIOUSLY FROM CROWN PRINCE OF RAS-AL-KHAIMAH, NAELY THAT AL-RUMAIH'S TRIP HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH LONG-STANDING SAUDI-ABU DHABI BORDER DISPUTE, BUT RATHER HE VISITED UAE AND OMAN IN EFFORT TO MEDIATE A RELATIVELY MINOR BUT LONG-STANDING BORDER PROBLEM INVOLVING RAS-AL-KHAIMAH AND THE SULTANATE, WHICH FLARED UP AGAIN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. THE DISPUTED TERRITORY IS LOCATED TO NORTH OF RAK VILLAGE OF ASH-SHAAM AT RAS AL-QAWARAT (WHICH RAK CALLS RAS ASH-SHAAM) ON THE MUSANDAM PENINSULA. SAG (I.E. AL-RUMAIH) REQUESTED BY SHAIKH SAQR OF RAK TO INTERCEDE WITH GOVT OF OMAN (GOQ) AFTER WHAT SAQR FELT WAS INATTENTION BY HIS OWN

GOVT TO RAK'S COMPLAINT OF OMAN BORDER INCURSIONS IN NOV. 1973. UNDERSTAND RUMAIH SUCCEEDED IN GETTING GOO AND RAK TO AGREE PULL BACK THEIR RESPECTED MIL FORCES FROM DISPUTED BORDER AREA, ALTHOUGH RAK SOURCES CLAIM GOO HAS FAILED IMPLEMENT UNDERSTANDING. GRIFFIN

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